

Memo from

To: HAZ

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

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a more cheerful note

One of my colleagues in microbiology responded to the attached query with his lecture notes in Chemistry-245, Jan-Mar 1941 (sic), which it has been a pleasure to explore.

The entries for 2/18/41 are particularly revealing, and I would make a strong bet are the trigger that Beadle mentions in his Recollections. I would guess that Tatum did lay it out to the point of picturing how genes might be involved in the biosynthesis of thiamin, resulting in growth-factor requirements of different kinds; and that Beadle made the leaps to a) "'Let's look for mutants this way'", and b) recalling Dodge and Lindegren's work on Neurospora, "let's try that organism." (Neurospora is recalled in the textbook by Sturtevant and Beadle 1938or9)

Then Tatum would have recalled that Fries had worked on the nutrition of other ascomycetes at Kogl's lab (36-37) and offered to try to grow Neurospora on synthetic media, which had not been done previously.

I am only uneasy that v. Wagtendonk says they had already started irradiating Neurospora in FEBRUARY 41, which is a superfast reaction. When I can get to the Tatum notebooks, if they really still exist at Rockefeller archives, I may be able to crosscheck the dates.



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